

Errata—General practice activity in Australia 2003–04

1. Introduction—Page 1, Paragraph 6

An error was made in the introduction (Page 1, General practice activity in Australia 2003–04) in the reporting of the number of FWE GPs or OMPs per population. The figure was given per 100,000 people rather than per 1,000,000 people. The corrected paragraph is presented below.

“Recognised GPs accounted for about 80% of the 21,338 primary care practitioners, both recognised GPs and other medical practitioners (OMPs), who provided at least one Medicare item of service in the last quarter of 2001. This equated to 16,824.3 full-time workload equivalent (FWE) GPs/OMPs practising in Australia (personal communication, Health Insurance Commission, February 2004). Therefore, there were 867 FWE GPs or OMPs per 1,000,000 people.”

7. Problems managed—Page 44, Table 7.4

An error was also made in Table 7.4, most frequently managed problems (Page 44, General practice activity in Australia 2003–04). The results for ‘*diabetes – all**’ and ‘*lipid disorders**’ were inadvertently reversed. The corrected text and table are presented below.

Table 7.4 includes the most frequently managed individual problems in general practice, in decreasing order of frequency.

In this analysis, the specific chapter to which ‘across chapter concepts’ (immunisation/vaccination, and prescriptions) apply is ignored and the concept grouped to all other similar concepts. For example, immunisation/vaccination includes influenza vaccinations (from Chapter R—respiratory) as well as those for childhood immunisation (Chapter A—general and unspecified), hepatitis immunisation (Chapter D—digestive) and neurological immunisations such as the haemophilus B vaccine (Chapter N).

The 30 most frequently managed problems accounted for almost half of all the problems managed in general practice (47.8%). Overall, 146.3 problems were managed per 100 encounters. The most frequently managed problem was hypertension, at an average rate of 9.2 per 100 encounters. The management of hypertension accounted for 6.3% of all problems in 2003–04. URTI was the second most commonly managed problem (5.5 per 100 encounters), accounting for 3.7% of all problems managed. Together, these two problems accounted for 10.0% of all problems managed in general practice.

Other problems that were managed frequently included immunisations/vaccinations (3.2 per 100 encounters), depression (2.5 per 100), lipid disorders (2.3 per 100), diabetes (2.1 per 100), osteoarthritis (1.9 per 100), back complaints (1.8 per 100), asthma (1.8 per 100) and acute bronchitis or bronchiolitis (1.7 per 100 encounters).

It is interesting to note that a number of non-diagnostic problem labels were included in the most frequently managed problems. Examples of these include preventive activities (immunisations/vaccinations), providing medication prescriptions or test results, and check-ups, both general check-ups and those specific to a body system (female genital and cardiac).

It is notable that oral contraception is included in the 30 most frequently managed problems in 2003–04, at an average rate of 1.4 per 100 encounters. This rate is significantly higher than

the rate recorded in the previous year of BEACH (0.9 per 100 encounters, 95% CI: 0.7–1.1). It is thought that the increase in oral contraceptive use could partially be explained by a move away from the use of injected forms of contraception, such as implanon, following the medical indemnity issues regarding this form of contraception.³²

Table 7.4: Most frequently managed problems

Problem managed	Number	Per cent of total problems (n=144,674)	Rate per 100 encounters^(a) (n=98,877)	95% LCL	95% UCL
Hypertension*	9,099	6.3	9.2	8.7	9.7
Upper respiratory tract infection	5,395	3.7	5.5	5.1	5.9
Immunisation/vaccination—all*	4,674	3.2	4.7	4.2	5.2
Depression*	3,606	2.5	3.7	3.4	3.8
Lipid disorders*	3,264	2.3	3.3	3.1	3.5
Diabetes—all*	3,093	2.1	3.1	2.9	3.4
Osteoarthritis*	2,748	1.9	2.8	2.6	3.0
Back complaint*	2,637	1.8	2.7	2.5	2.9
Asthma	2,530	1.8	2.6	2.4	2.7
Acute bronchitis/bronchiolitis	2,396	1.7	2.4	2.2	2.6
Prescription—all*	2,281	1.6	2.3	1.8	2.8
Oesophageal disease	2,154	1.5	2.2	2.0	2.4
General check-up*	1,806	1.3	1.8	1.6	2.0
Female genital check-up/Pap smear*	1,759	1.2	1.8	1.4	2.1
Contact dermatitis	1,747	1.2	1.8	1.6	1.9
Anxiety*	1,694	1.2	1.7	1.5	1.9
Urinary tract infection*	1,650	1.1	1.7	1.6	1.8
Sleep disturbance	1,593	1.1	1.6	1.5	1.8
Sprain/strain*	1,564	1.1	1.6	1.4	1.7
Ischaemic heart disease*	1,346	0.9	1.4	1.2	1.5
Oral contraception*	1,338	0.9	1.4	1.2	1.5
Solar keratosis/sunburn	1,313	0.9	1.3	1.0	1.7
Viral disease, other/NOS	1,301	0.9	1.3	1.0	1.6
Sinusitis acute/chronic	1,281	0.9	1.3	1.1	1.5
Test results*	1,225	0.9	1.2	1.0	1.5
Acute otitis media/myringitis	1,166	0.8	1.2	1.0	1.4
Gastroenteritis, presumed infection	1,148	0.8	1.2	1.0	1.4
Cardiac check-up*	1,144	0.8	1.2	0.8	1.5
Tonsillitis*	1,130	0.8	1.1	1.0	1.3
Malignant neoplasm, skin	1,094	0.8	1.1	0.7	1.5
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>69,175</i>	<i>47.8</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>—</i>
Total problems	144,674	100.0	146.3	144.4	148.2

(a) Figures do not total 100 as more than one problem can be managed at each encounter.

* Includes multiple ICPC-2 or ICPC-2 PLUS codes (see Appendix 3).

Note: UCL—upper confidence limit; LCL—lower confidence limit; NOS—not otherwise specified.